

REMARKS

At the outset, the Examiner is thanked for the thorough review and consideration of the pending application. The Office Action dated March 25, 2009, has been received and its contents carefully reviewed.

Claims 1, 8, 10, and 13 are hereby amended. Claims 3, 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, and 14-19 are hereby canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the contents contained therein. No claims are added. Accordingly, claims 1, 2, 5, 8-10, and 13 are currently pending. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action the claims are objected to for informalities noted therein. *Office Action* at p. 2, ¶ 1. Applicant has corrected the claims accordingly, and respectfully request that the Office withdraw this objection.

Claims 1, 4, 11, 16, and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly claim the subject matter which the Applicant regards as the invention, as discussed in the Office Action. The rejection of claims 4, 11, 16, and 18 is moot as claims 4, 11, 16, and 18 are canceled herein.

Regarding claim 1, Applicant respectfully asserts that the structure of the “connecting portion” is clearly pointed out in the claim. Accordingly, Applicant requests that the Examiner withdraw this rejection of independent claim 1.

Claims 1-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Publication No. DE 196 50 861 to Sassone (hereinafter “*Sassone*”) in view of Publication No. DE 37 28 608 to Riller et al. (hereinafter “*Riller*”). *Office Action* at p. 3, ¶ 6. The rejection of claims 3, 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, and 14-19 is moot as claims 3, 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, and 14-19 are canceled herein. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of the remaining claims and requests reconsideration.

Independent claim 1 is allowable over *Sassone* in view of *Riller* in that claim 1 recites a combination of elements including, for example,

an inner case enclosing at least the connecting portion; and
an outer case provided at an exterior of the inner case,
wherein the space within the outer case is partitioned by the inner case into a first space in which the valves are accommodated and a second space in which the connecting portion is accommodated,
and wherein a filler is injected only in the inner case.

As admitted by the Office, “*Sassone* does not teach that an outer case surrounding and connected to the inner case and forming an empty space.” *Office Action* at p. 4, ¶ 8. Thus, *Sassone* does not teach or suggest the features of claim 1.

The Office relies upon *Riller* to disclose an “outer case which surrounds the inner case and is connected to the inner case.” *Office Action* at p. 4. The proposed combination fails to teach or suggest all of the features of independent claim 1.

The Office asserts that *Sassone* discloses “[a]n inner case body (coat body 30) [that] encloses the connecting portion.” *Office Action* at p. 3, ¶ 7. *Sassone* discloses that “the valve housing (2A) and the fastening device (4A) are encased by a casing made of thermoplastics.” *Sassone* at Abstract. Thus, *Sassone*’s valves (4A) and the connecting portion, as described by the Office, are encased by the thermoplastic casing. In contrast Applicants claim, at least,

an inner case enclosing at least the connecting portion; and
an outer case provided at an exterior of the inner case,
wherein the space within the outer case is partitioned by the inner case into a first space in which the valves are accommodated and a second space in which the connecting portion is accommodated,
and wherein a filler is injected only in the inner case.

Therefore, even if *Sassone* were combined with *Riller* as asserted by the Office, the proposed combination of references fails to teach or suggest all of the features as recited in independent claim 1.

For at least these reasons, Applicant respectfully requests that the Office withdraw the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of independent claim 1. Claims 2, 5, 8-10, and 13 depend from independent claim 1. It stands to reason that the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection of those dependent claims should be withdrawn as well.

CONCLUSION

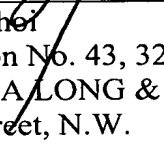
The application is in condition for allowance. Early, favorable action is respectfully solicited.

If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at (202) 496-7500 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance. All correspondence should continue to be sent to the below-listed address.

If these papers are not considered timely filed by the Patent and Trademark Office, then a petition is hereby made under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136, and any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 for any necessary extension of time, or any other fees required to complete the filing of this response, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0911. Please credit any overpayment to deposit Account No. 50-0911.

Respectfully submitted,

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